

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----035155 262107Z /75
P 251917Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5707

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 0301

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FOR ARA MC NIEL AND USOAS TRAGEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, UY, OAS
SUBJ: URUGUAYAN-OASGA INITIATIVE

REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 0135 (B) MONTEVIDEO 0158

1. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO REVIEW RECENT EVENTS TO CHART WHERE WE ARE AND TO VIEW FUTURE PROSPECTS. AS NOTED IN MONTEVIDEO 0135, IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE OUTSET THAT THE GOU GAMBIT TO INVITE THE OAS TO HOLD THE VIII GA IN MONTEVIDEO WAS THE BRAINCHILD OF FONMIN ROVIRA AND HIS CHIEF OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ALVARO ALVAREZ, ON THIS END, AND OF URUGUAYAN OAS AMBASSADOR ROCA, IN WASHINGTON. THEIR MANEUVER WAS DESIGNED TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE IAHC AND ITS PARENT BODY THE OAS, IN KEEPING WITH THE BELIGERENT ATTITUDE THESE INDIVIDUALS CONSISTENTLY HAVE PURSUED TOWARD THE COMMISSION. I BELIEVE THEY SOLD THE IDEA TO THEIR MILITARY COMMANDERS AS A MASTER STROKE TO HUMILIATE SIMULTANEOUSLY THE IAHC, USG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND OTHER EXTERNAL CRITICS OF THE GOU'S PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS HAS BEEN THE CONSTANT OBJECTIVE OF THE EXTREME RIGHT HERE, TO WHICH THE MODERATES HAVE ACCEDED BECAUSE IT SEEMED TO HAVE OBVIOUS BENEFITS.

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2. BUT THE ROVIRA-ALVAREZ-ROCA CABAL MISCALCULATED. FACED WITH OUR OPPOSITION, IT SOON BECAME APPARENT THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE VOTES COMMITTED TO ASSURE THEY COULD WIN A VOTE TO HOLD THE OASGA HERE. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THEY CAME TO REALIZE THAT, EVEN IF THEY WON THE VOTE, AN OASGA HELD IN MONTEVIDEO OVER OUR OBJECTIONS,

AND WHICH THE SECRETARY DID NOT ATTEND, WOULD BE A MEANINGLESS EVENT. THE REPORTED REFUSAL OF VENEZUELA TO ATTEND AND THE PROSPECT OF OTHERS FOLLOWING SUIT, ADDED TO THIS NEGATIVE. THE LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER FROM PRESIDENT MENDEZ INNOCENTLY ASKING OUR SUPPORT FOR THEIR INVITATION AS IF HISTORY BEGAN ON THAT DATE WAS A DESPERATE ACTION BY THE ROVIRA CAMP TO RESCUS WHAT LOOMED AS A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC DEBACLE.

3. FACED WITH A POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC DEFEAT OF MAJOR PROPORTION AND AWARE THAT USG OPPOSITION WAS BASED ON THE GOU'S DIFFERENCES WITH THE IAHR, THE MODERATES IN THE ARMED FORCES, WITH PALADINI TAKING THE LEAD, DECIDED TO ACT ON THEIR OWN. THE PALADINI INITIATIVE (REF A) IS SIGNIFICANT, IN THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THIS ISSUE THE CINCS AND THE KEY FIGURES IN THE ARMED FORCES ARE INVOLVED IN THE SUBSTANCE. THEY ULTIMATELY MADE THE DECISION TO POSTPONE THE VOTE ON THE SIRE OF THE VIII OASGA AND TO ACCEPT OUR "GOOD OFFICES" IN SEEKING A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IAHR. IT WILL BE A ROCKY ROAD, BUT SIGNIFICANTLY THEY HAVE DECIDED TO GIVE IT A TRY.

4. TWO SIGNIFICANT THINGS HAVE OCCURRED SO FAR. FIRST, THE HARD-LINE GROUP THAT INITIATED THE ABORTED INVITATION TO THE OAS BROUGHT THE COUNTRY TO THE BRINK OF A DIPLOMATIC DISASTER AND LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MILITARY MODERATES. CONFIDENTIAL

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SECOND, THE MODERATES AMONG THE HIGH MILITARY COMMANDERS BYPASSING THE ROVIRA/ROCA GROUP HAVE AGREED TO SEND A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE IAHR.

5. OUR ROLE NOW SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PROVIDING OUR GOOD OFFICES TO BOTH PARTIES TO HELP THEM REACH AN APPROCHMENT. WE MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO VIEW THE PROCESS IN THREE STAGES. ONCE THE IAHR AND THE GOU HAVE REMOVED THE OBSTACLE OF THEIR PAST DIFFERENCES AND ARE SERIOUSLY ENGAGED IN ESTABLISHING A NEW RELATIONSHIP, THE FIRST STAGE WOULD BE ACHIEVED. THE SECOND STAGE WOULD BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN SOME FORM, EITHER IN A POST-NEGOTIATION COMMUNIQUE OR BY MEANS OF AN IAHR REPORT TO THE PARENT BODY, THAT THE IAHR HAS REACHED AN ACCORD WITH THE GOU ON THE TERMS OF A FUTURE RELATIONSHIP. I THINK IT WOULD BE WELL WORTH IMPLANTING IN THE MINDS OF KEY MEMBERS OF THE IAHR AT THAT TIME THAT WE BELIEVE DETAILS OF THIS OVERALL ACCORD AND CRITICAL ASPECTS OF IT SUCH AS THE DATES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A VISIT IN EITHER AN ADVISORY OR MONITORING ROLE SHOULD BE PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD AND MADE KNOWN TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OAS BEFORE THE VIII OASGA. THE THIRD STAGE WOULD BE PRESIDENT CARTER'S RESPONSE TO MENDEZ'

LETTER, WHICH WOULD DRAW ON THE FIRST TWO STAGES FOR ITS
SUBSTANCE, AS WOULD OUR EVENTUAL VOTE ON THE SITE OF THE
VIII OASGA.

6. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT ONCE THE TWO
PARTIES ARE ENGAGED IN HONEST NEGOTIATIONS, WE WILL HAVE
REACHED THE THRESHOLD OF A BREAKTHROUGH ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS
PROBLEM HERE. THE MODERATE MILITARY DECISION-MAKERS WHO TOOK
THE DECISION TO START DOWN THIS NEW ROAD DID SO BECAUSE
THEY CAME TO REALIZE, AT LONG LAST, THAT THEIR CIVILIAN
ADVISERS HAD BROUGHT THEM TO THE BRINK OF A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC
DEFEAT. THE MOMENTUM BEHIND THIS DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE MUST
BE AIDED BY OUR GOOD OFFICES AND BY A FORTHCOMING POSITION
ON THE PART OF THE IAHRC, IF IT IS TO BEAR FRUIT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, INVITATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MONTEVIDEO0301
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780039-0607
Format: TEL
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780124/aaaaaujh.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 93cca1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 MONTEVIDEO 135, 78 MONTEVIDEO 158
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3717271
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: URUGUAYAN-OASGA INITIATIVE
TAGS: PORG, SHUM, UY, OAS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/93cca1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014